

**TOWN OF LEXINGTON  
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

***PROJECT APPLICATION SUMMARY FORM***

**Project Title: Interpretive Signage Project**

**APPLICANT INFORMATION**

**Name of Applicant/Contact Person: Susan Bennett**

**Title/Position: Executive Director**

**Group or Committee Affiliation (if any): Lexington Historical Society**

**Applicant/Contact Person 's address, contact phone number, and email:**

P.O. Box 514, Lexington, MA 02420      781-862-1703 director@lexingtonhistory.org

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

Project Site Address: multiple, throughout  
Lexington

Purpose (please check all that apply)

- Open Space
- Historic
- Recreation
- Housing

Project Site Assessors Map/Parcel: \_\_\_\_\_  
Project Site Deed Book/Page: \_\_\_\_\_  
Current Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Project Description: The Lexington Historical Society would like to reinvigorate the interpretive signage program established by the Society in 1975 in cooperation with the Lexington Bicentennial Committee. While the project has stood the test of time, some markers are missing, some need to be replaced and all should eventually be remounted. In addition, a modest expansion of the project will be undertaken.

**COSTS**

Fiscal Year	Total Project Cost	CPC Funds Requested	Other Funding Sources (amount and source)
2013	\$38,400	\$38,400	In-kind support from Historical Society
2014			
2015			
2016			
2017			
TOTAL			

Signature of Applicant: Susan Bennett      Date: 10/27/16

<b>For Community Preservation Committee Use:</b>	
Form Received on: _____	Project Presented to CPC on: _____
Reviewed by: _____	Determination: _____

**TOWN OF LEXINGTON  
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

**Project Title:** Interpretive Signage Project

***Please attach a narrative on all applicable subjects.***

1. Scope or concept of project: In 1975, the Lexington Historical Society, in cooperation with the Town's Bicentennial Committee, established three historic walking trails in Lexington in the areas comprising our historic districts: the Battle Green and Lexington Center, Hancock Street, the Munroe District, and East Lexington. There are 32 signs in all. A walking guide to the trails was also produced but is now out of print.

This project has stood the test of time. The content remains relevant and interesting. The signs themselves are handsome, made of heavy aluminum tinted brown and most contain a graphic as well as text. Most are in decent shape, but some are missing and some deserve to be upgraded. The mounting of the signs is a particularly problematic issue. They are mounted on telephone pole sections apparently donated by the phone company and some of those are rotting.

The Historical Society has worked with the Historical Commission and the Historic Districts Commission on standards for interpretive signage. There appears to be common agreement that the current signage should be preserved, restored or replaced as appropriate, and that a modest expansion of signage, particularly in the Center would be warranted. This proposal has been discussed with the Ad Hoc Committee on the Center Streetscape.

2. Project goal and objectives: (Indicate how the Category Specific Criteria for the CPA are met.): This is a project for the "Historic" category of CPA, involving historical interpretation as well as preservation of existing signage.

The objectives are as follows:

- To replace 4 signs that are missing altogether;
- To expand the trail with up to 8 additional signs;
- To replace 8 existing signs that have been damaged;
- To re-mount 3 signs that are in storage;
- To update signage content where necessary;
- To replace the current wooden mounts with heavy metal mounts that will harmonize with the signage itself but be basically inconspicuous;

- To create a new, laminated map that can be used by those interested in walking the route of the interpretive signs.
3. Projected action plan and timeline: (List steps needed to complete project. These steps will be critical to completing Project Status Reports that will be due in time to report back to Town Meeting each year until the project is complete.): If funding is obtained, the project could be completed within calendar year 2017.
  4. Anticipated project cost: (Provide a budget, with line itemization.)

Based on a quotation from a Bluebird Graphic Solution in Woburn, anticipated costs are as follows:

Pricing for 20 Signs - \$9,800. (\$490 ea.)  
 File Preparation estimated 1/2 hr per sign - \$1000 (\$100/hr)  
 Pricing for 40 Posts - \$7,600  
 Installation for 40 locations \$10,000- (\$250 each)

Graphic design and production of guide to the trails - \$5000

Total estimated costs - \$33,400  
 Contingency - 5,000

Total request \$38,400

5. Other funding sources, including private/public/in-kind: The Historical Society will oversee the design, production and installation process and the production of the trail guide as an in-kind contribution.
6. CPA funding request: \$38,400
7. Budget justification: (Provide an explanation for why each type of expense is needed.): See above
8. List and describe any comparable projects: The Historical Society has a long history of developing interpretive materials for the community, including guide books, vintage photograph books, walking tours, and the like. The Society was responsible for the original creation of the trail that is the subject of this application.
9. Relevance to community: (Indicate how project is relevant to the current and/or future needs of Lexington.) Exploration of Lexington's history by

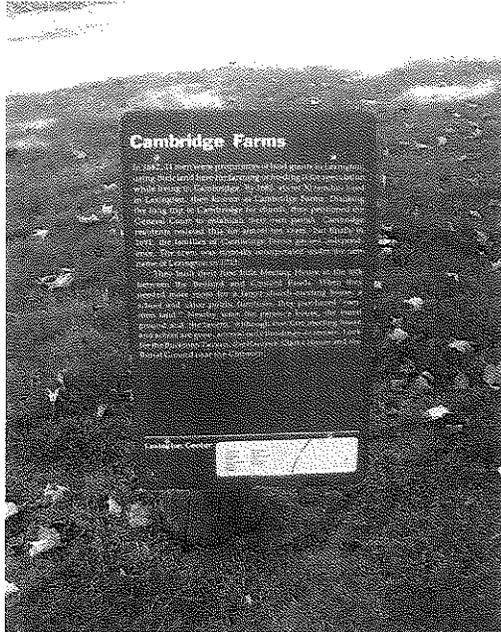
residents and visitors has always been a community priority. Augmenting the interpretive program in the Center will enrich those who use it.

10. Supporting documents: (Provide supporting letters, references, studies, maps, and statistics.) Pictures of the existing signage are attached, along with a copy of the walking trail guide.

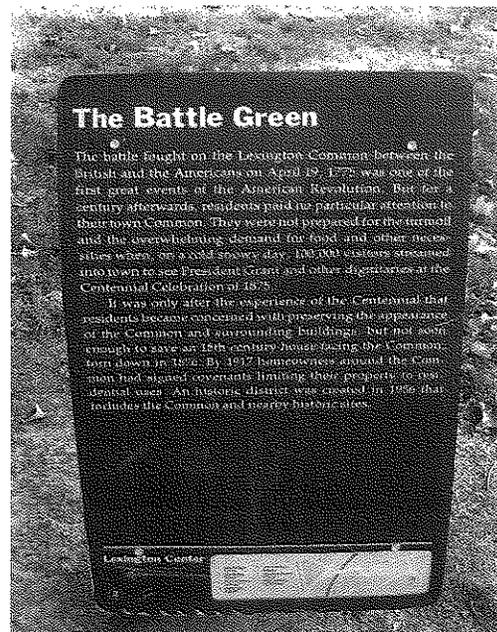
# Preserving Our Heritage – Three Walking Trails in Lexington

## Lexington Center Trail

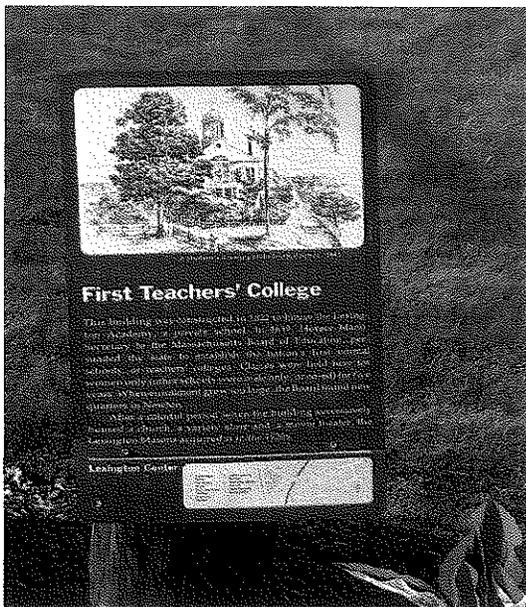
### C-1 Cambridge Farms



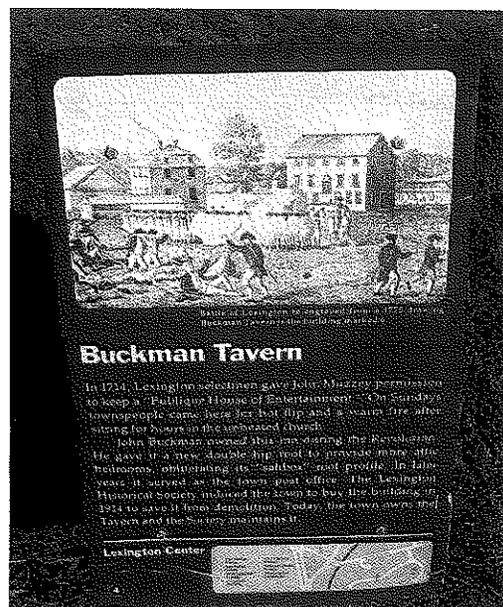
### C-2 The Battle Green



### C-3 First Teachers College



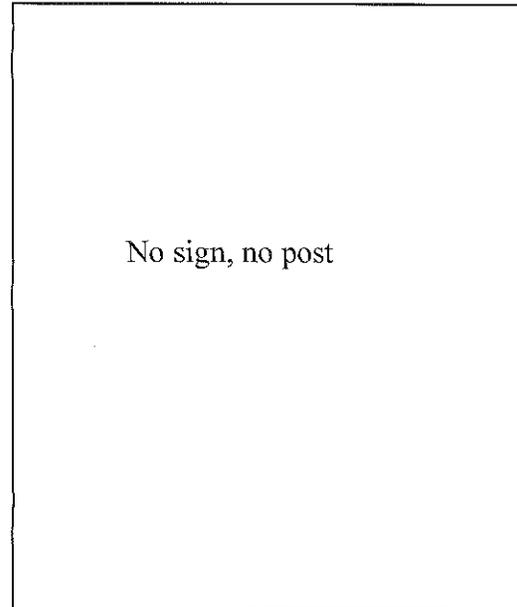
### C-4 Buckman Tavern



**C-5 19th Century Design**

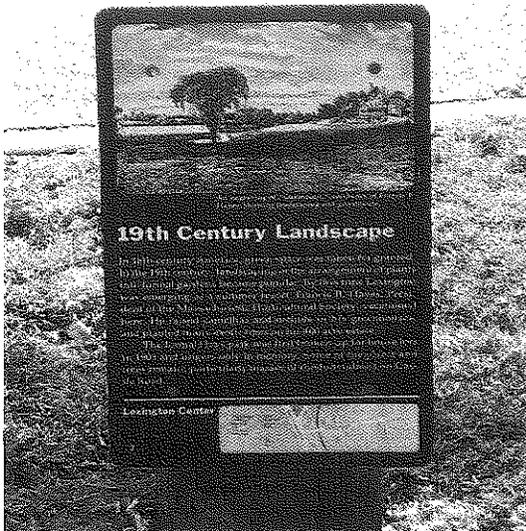


**C-6 Hancock-Clarke House**

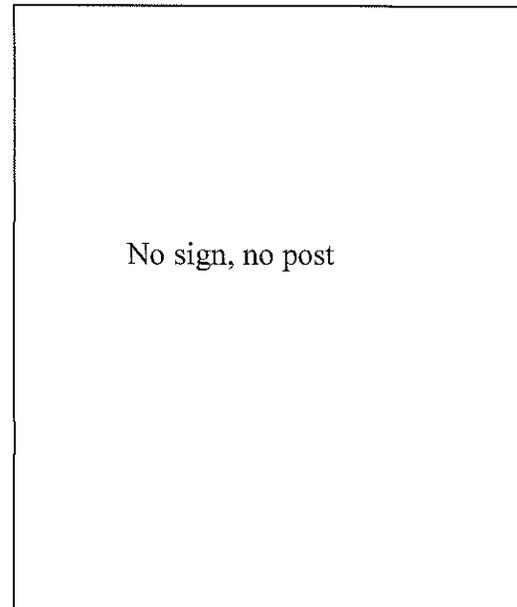


No sign, no post

**C-7 19th Century Landscape**

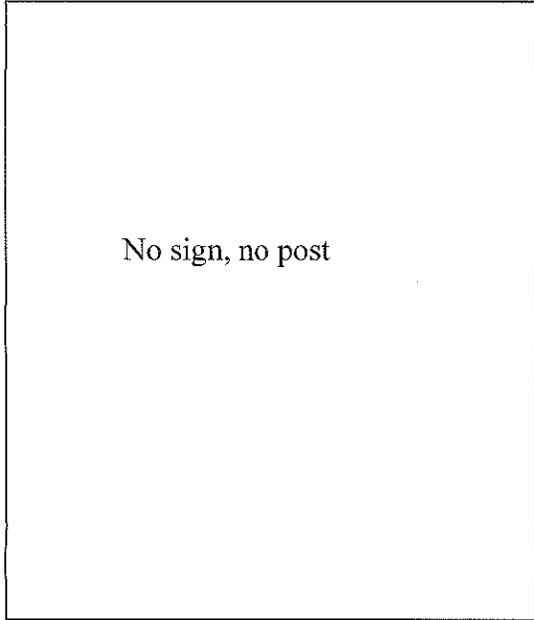


**C-8 Merriam Hill**



No sign, no post

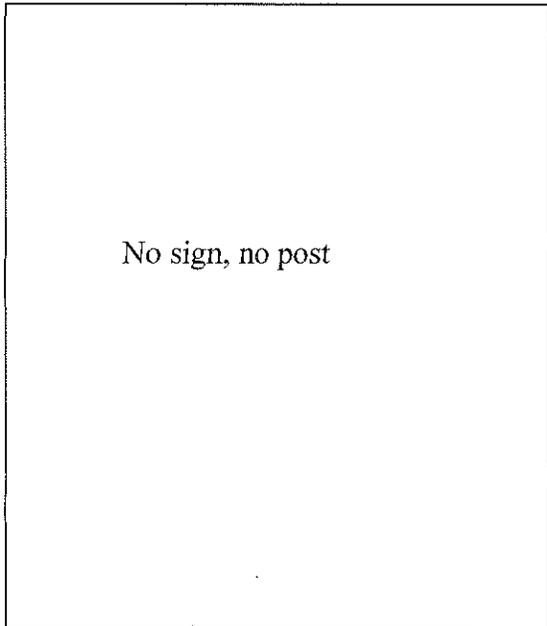
### C-9 Rural Economy



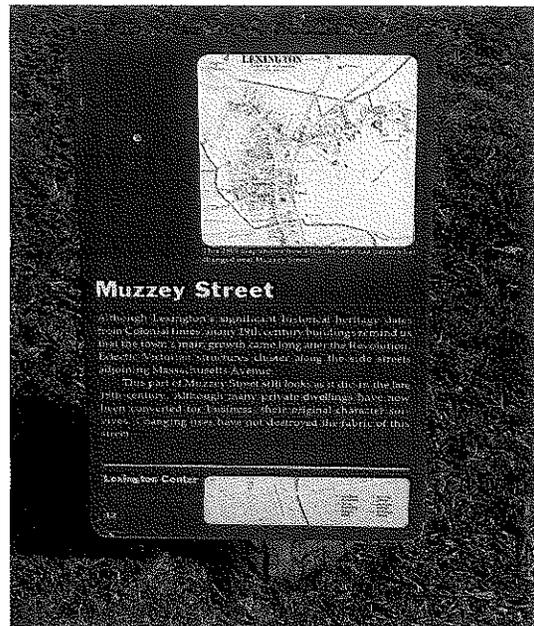
### C-10 Town Planning



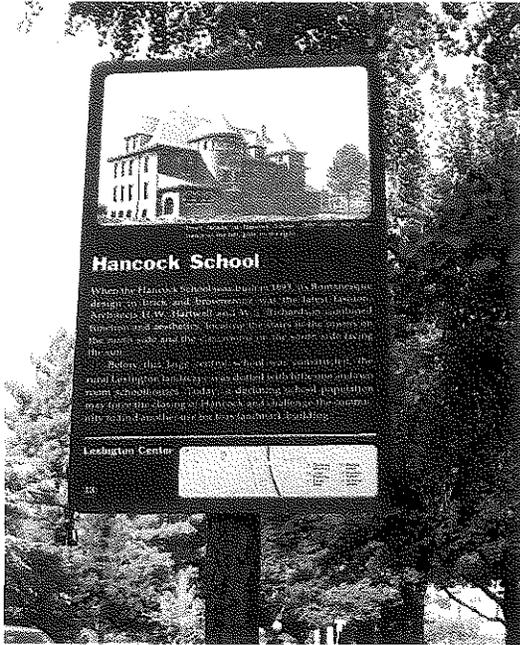
### C-11 Emery Park



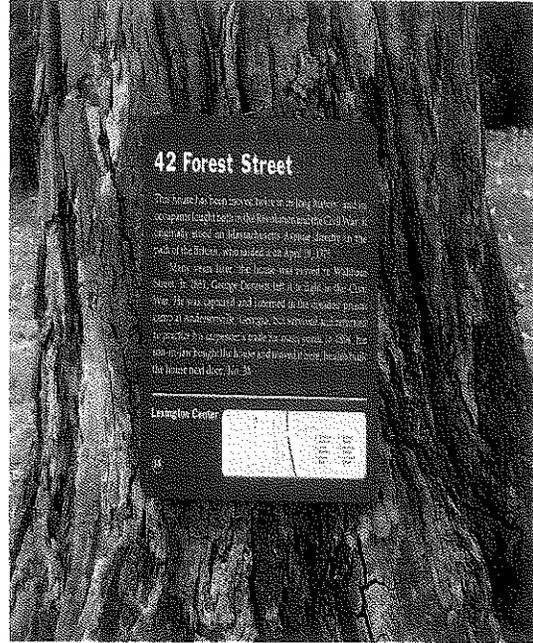
### C-12 Muzzey Street



**C-13 Hancock School**

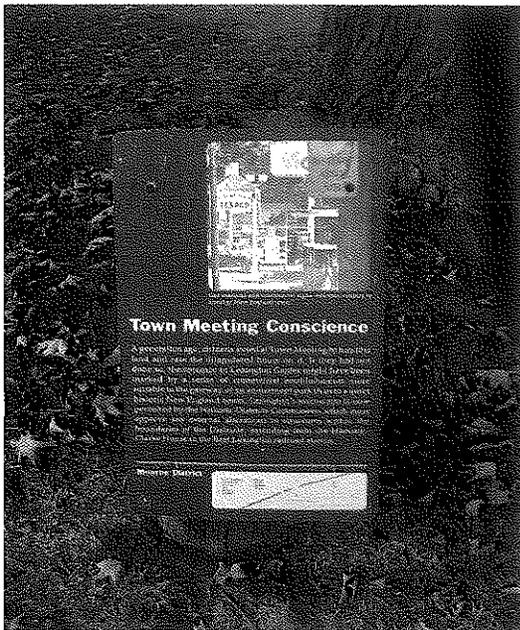


**C-14 42 Forest Street**

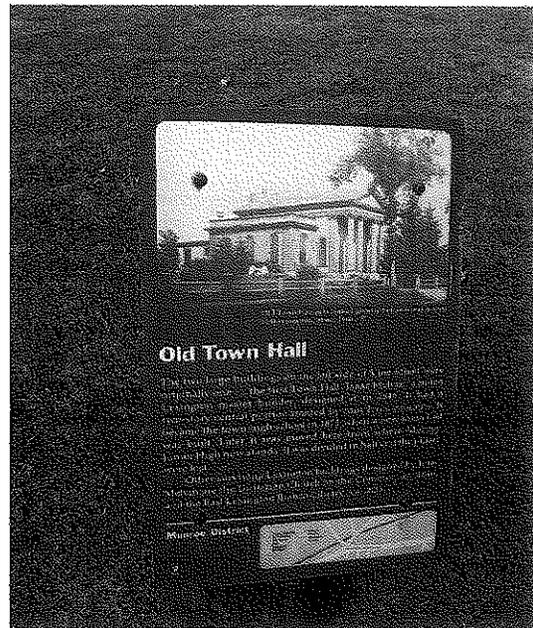


**Munroe Trail**

**M-1 Town Meeting Conscience**

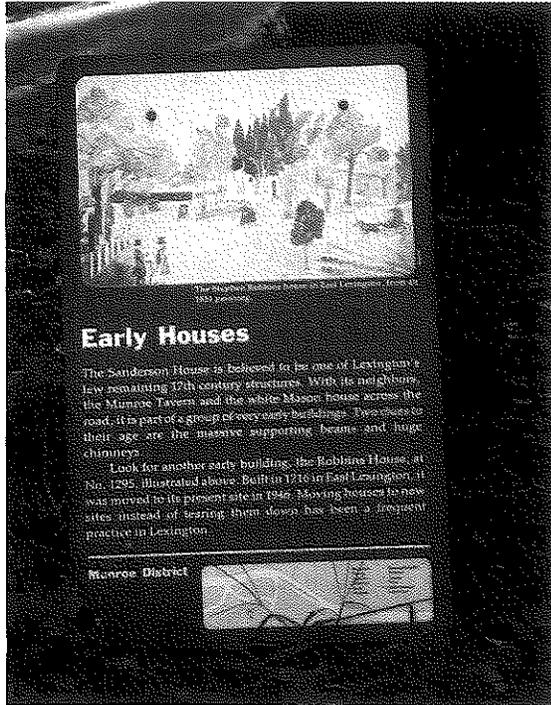


**M-2 Old Town Hall**

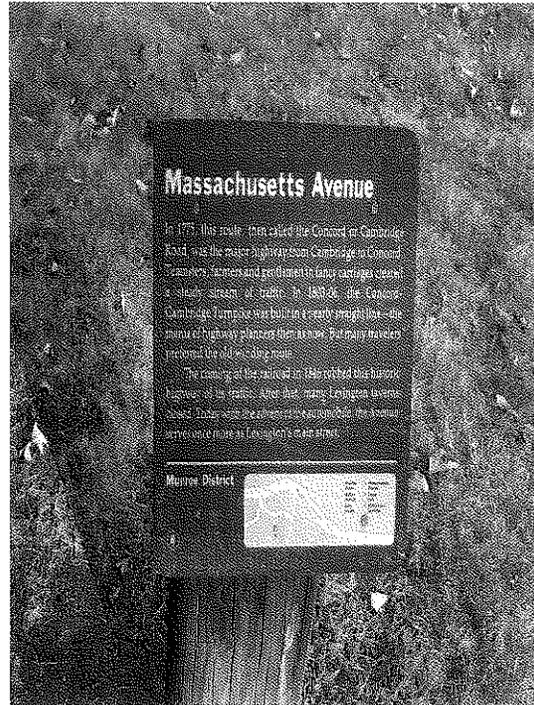




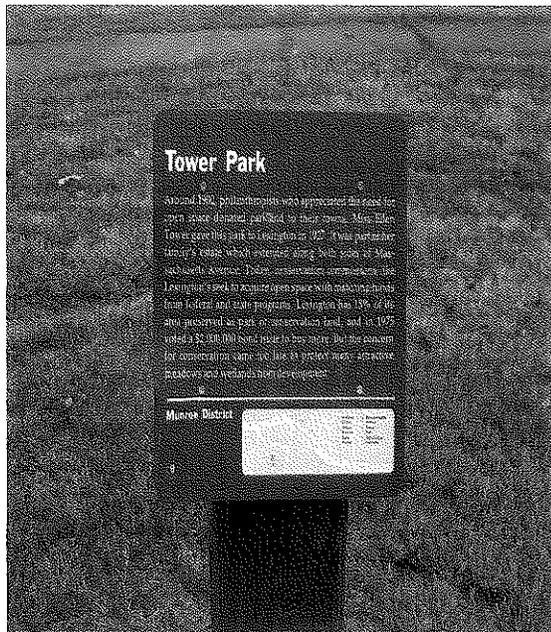
**M-7 Early Houses**



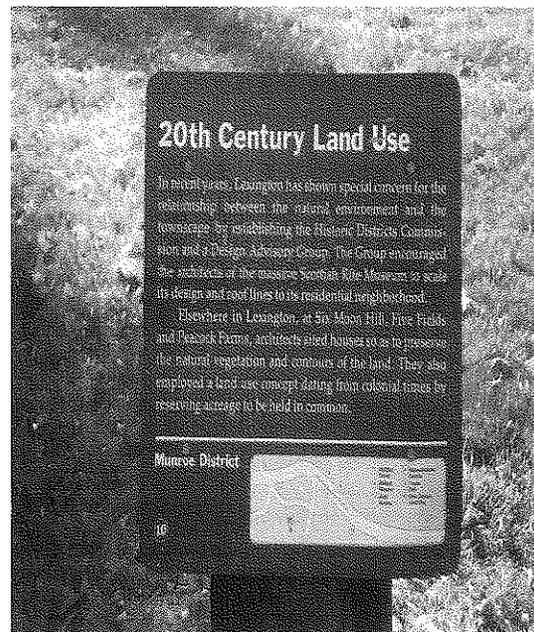
**M-8 Massachusetts Avenue**



**M-9 Tower Park**

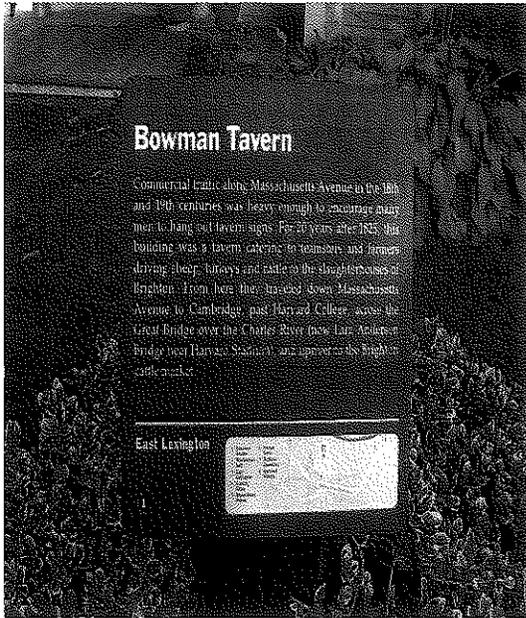


**M-10 20th Century Land Use**

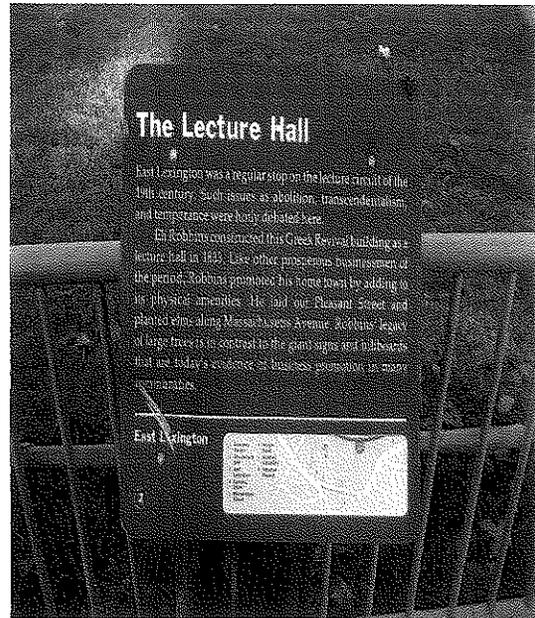


# East Lexington Trail

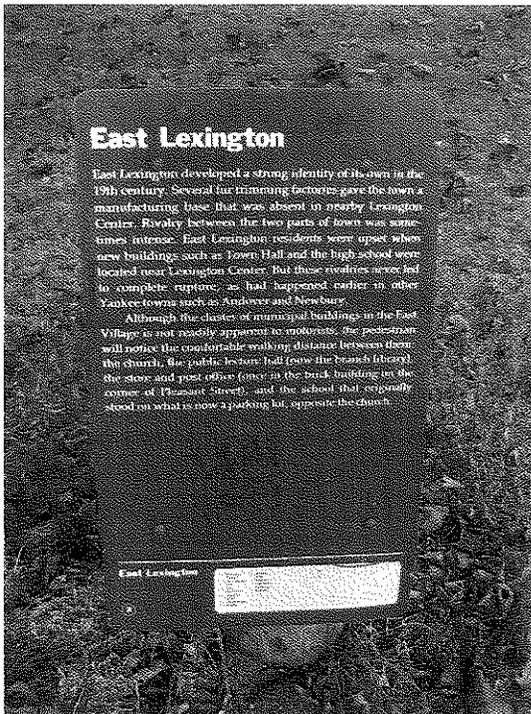
## E-1 Bowman Tavern



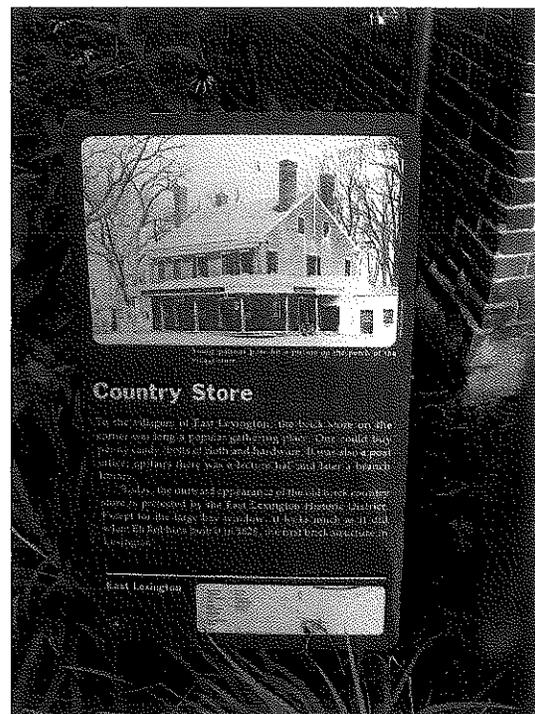
## E-2 The Lecture Hall



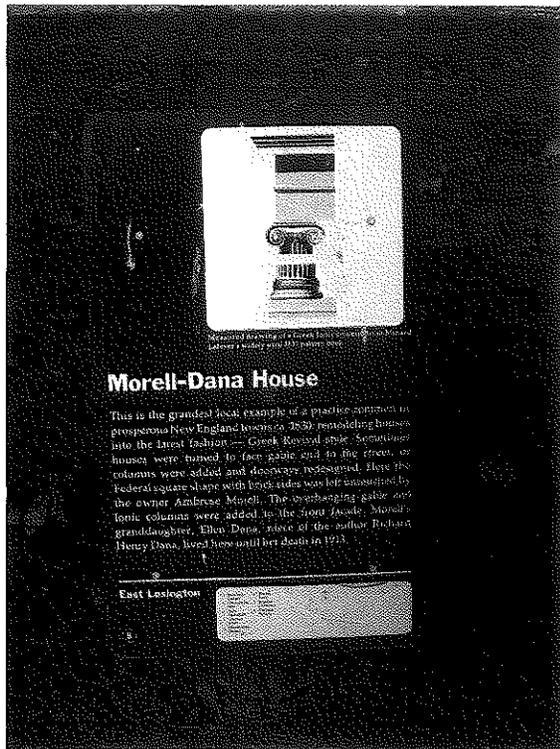
## E-3 East Lexington



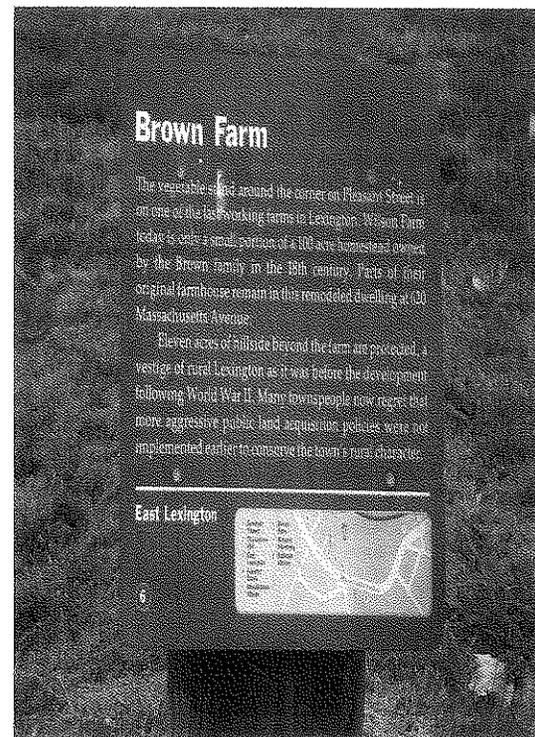
## E-4 Country Store



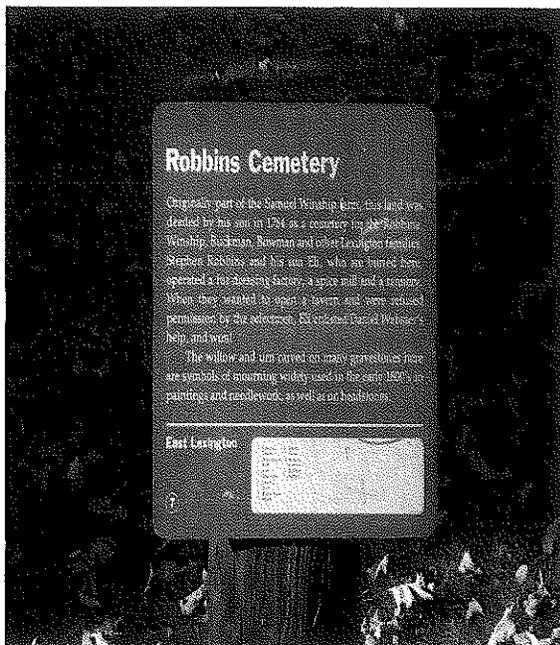
**E-5 Morell-Dana House**



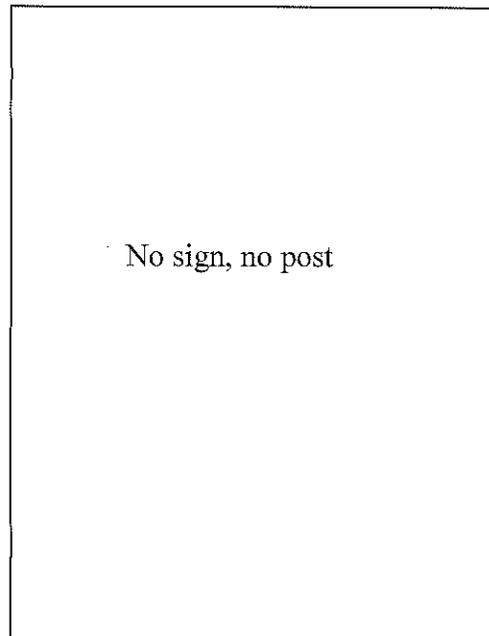
**E-6 Brown Farm**



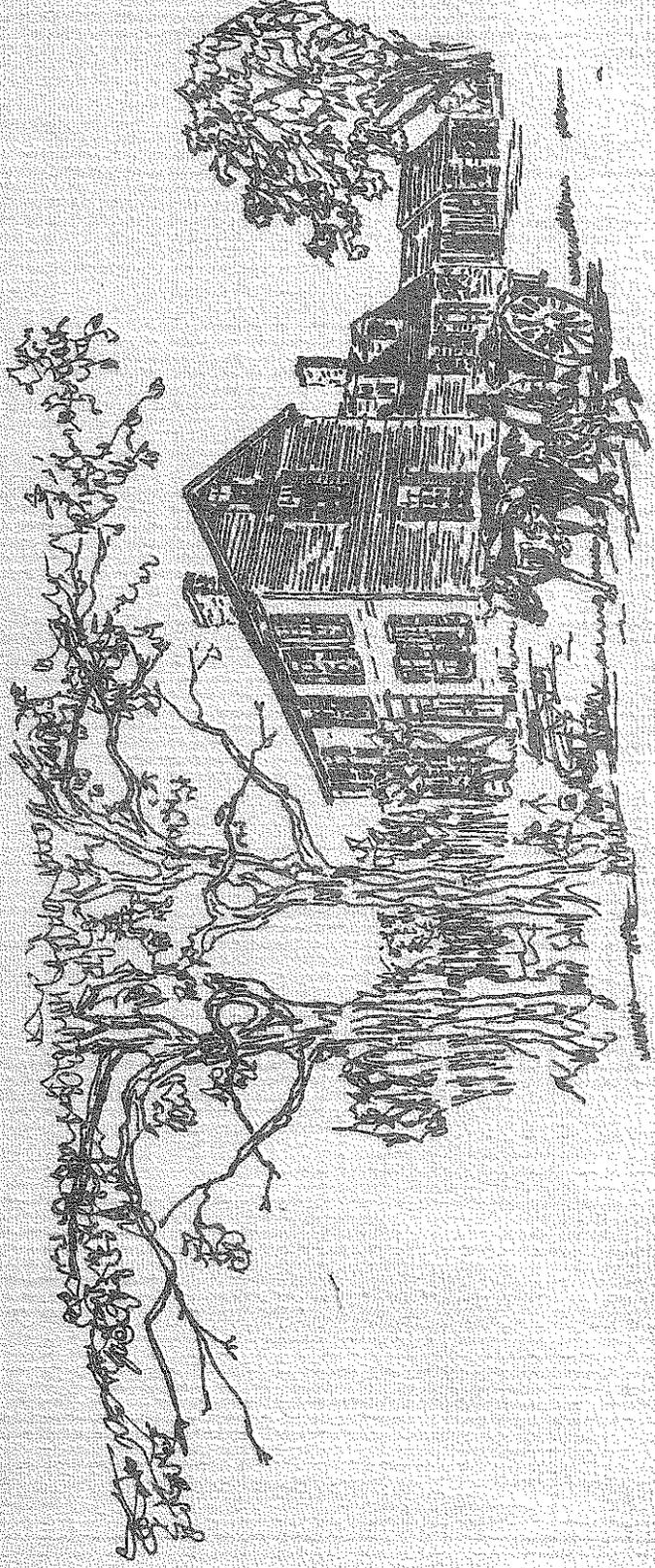
**E-7 Robbins Cemetery**



**E-8 Railroad History**



# PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE



three walking trails in Lexington

## Acknowledgments

This project—THREE WALKING TRAILS IN LEXINGTON—was sponsored by the Lexington Historical Society with the cooperation of the Lexington Bicentennial Committee.

Background research and preparation of the Markers was conducted under a contract with Vision, Inc., of Cambridge, Ms. Nina Meyer, principal staff officer.

This booklet was prepared by Brochures Unlimited of Lexington

The work was financed by a grant from the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities matched by contributions from the sponsors and four Lexington banks:

Harvard Trust Company  
Leader Federal Savings and Loan Company  
Lexington Savings Bank  
Shawmut County Bank, N.A.

The Boston Edison Company, the New England Telephone Company and the Lexington Department of Public Works assisted in providing and installing the Markers.

Town officials and individual property owners granted rights to erect the Markers in off-street locations.

*Dan Fenn, Jr.  
Roland B. Greeley*

May 15, 1975

for the Lexington Historical Society

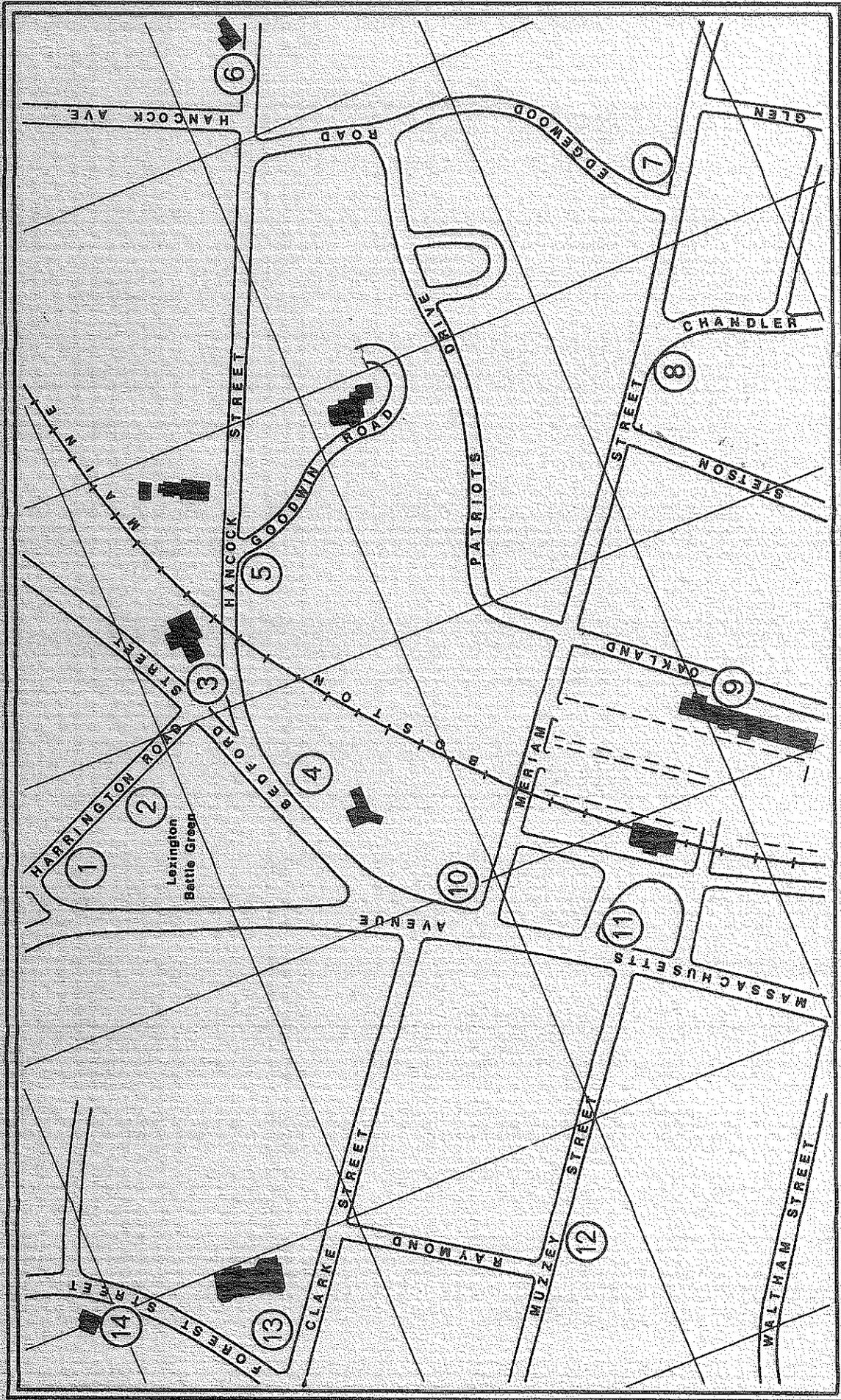
# Introduction

The purpose of the Lexington Historic Walking Trails is to help both visitors and residents understand and enjoy the history and development of the town. On these trails you will see Lexington's growth from rural beginnings to modern times; you will also see some of the catalysts for growth and change.

Every community has its cultural memory derived from objects, events, places and people associated with its own past, and Lexington has been particularly fortunate in having residents who were aware of its heritage. They have acted to protect the town's historical sites, the landscape surrounding these sites and its green space so that, even with two high-speed highways, a large air base and many new self-contained residential subdivisions, Lexington has kept its town meeting and an intimate village atmosphere. You will learn how this happened from the Markers on the Walking Trails. Also, as you walk, you may appreciate a secondary goal of this Marker Program: to have Lexington serve as a model for other communities whose residents may wish to study and preserve their own historic identity.

Three separate Walking Trails guide you to Markers that will describe and illustrate the story of Lexington. The Lexington Center Trail stresses the town's ability to harness and direct growth without destroying its historic Battle Green and surrounding village amenities. This Trail also illustrates the way the town looked and evolved through three centuries. The Munroe Trail includes important historic sites such as the Munroe Tavern and traces other aspects of Lexington's growth that are not included in the Center Trail. The East Lexington Trail shows the social and architectural heritage of that part of town—a district that has always had its own identity and sense of place.

You may pick up these Trails at any convenient point since each Marker will tell its own story. The Markers are numbered to provide continuity for each Trail; they also include maps showing previous and subsequent Markers. *Please remember that most Markers are on private property, designed to be viewed from the sidewalk. Houses are not open to the public unless this is specifically indicated.*



# LEXINGTON CENTER TRAIL

Using your imagination as you walk the 1.6 miles of the LEXINGTON CENTER TRAIL, you can see the town develop from a rural community to a summer resort and commuter's paradise to the present. Interspersed among the houses that existed at the time of the Revolution are a variety of 19th century dwellings ranging from the "vernacular" adaptations of pattern book designs by local carpenters to Queen Anne and Gothic Revival styles and, elegantly, an Italianate home complete with campanile. Here also are 20th century homes, reflecting the largely upper middle class character of the town.

Throughout this Trail you will find evidence of both individual and town planning which has regulated the expansion of business, the preservation of open space, the adaptation of older structures to modern needs, thus retaining the cultural heritage of Lexington. Responsibility for Lexington as it is today goes to individuals like Francis Hayes and F. L. Emery to the town meetings who had the foresight to adopt zoning and Historic Districts regulations before it was too late, and to the ever-watchful conscience of the Historical Society.

#### C-1 CAMBRIDGE FARMS

In 1642, 11 men were proprietors of land grants in Lexington, using their land here for farming or holding it for speculation while living in Cambridge. By 1682, about 30 families lived in Lexington, then known as Cambridge Farms. Disliking the long trip to Cambridge for church, they petitioned the General Court to establish their own parish. Because of the resistance of the Cambridge parishioners, it was 10 years before they finally gained their independence in 1691. The town was formally incorporated under the name of Lexington in 1713.

They built their first little Meeting House in the fork between the Bedford and Concord Roads. When they needed more room for a larger church-meeting house, a school and for other public functions, they purchased "common land." Nearby were the parson's house, the burial ground and the tavern. Although that first meetinghouse and school are gone, several early buildings do remain. Look for the Buckman Tavern, the Hancock-Clarke House and the Burial

#### C-4 BUCKMAN TAVERN

In 1714, Lexington selectmen gave John Muzzey permission to keep a "Publique House of Entertainment". On Sundays townspeople came here for hot flip and a warm fire after sitting for hours in the unheated church.

John Buckman owned this inn during the Revolution. He gave it a new double hip roof to provide more attic bedrooms, obliterating its "saltbox" roof profile. In later years it served as the town post office. The Lexington Historical Society induced the town to buy the tavern in 1914 to save it from demolition. Today, the town owns the Tavern and the Society maintains it.

#### C-5 19TH CENTURY DESIGN

Look for examples of 19th century architectural styles along Hancock Street. Local carpenters often copied these styles from pattern books and adapted them in a vernacular way. Across the street, jigsaw tracery adorns the porch of a Gothic Revival house. Mansard-roofed cottages line Hancock Avenue. The campanile or tower of an Italianate house rises on Goodwin Road. Although their styles vary, the harmonious scale and materials of these Victorian houses create a unified townscape. They stand today like old friends in conversation, their appearance recognizing common rules of decorum, the spaces between them carefully modulated.

#### C-6 HANCOCK-CLARKE HOUSE

In 1698 this house belonged to the village parson, Reverend John Hancock. He and a grandson-in-law, Jonas Clarke, were ministers here for a total of 107 years. On the night of April 18, 1775, Clarke's cousin, John Hancock, and Sam Adams, who had been staying here while attending meetings of the Provisional Congress in Concord, were warned by Paul Revere of the advancing British search party.

In 1896, another owner planned to tear down the parsonage to improve her view. The Historical Society bought the house for \$150 and moved it across the street. Nearly 80 years later it was returned to its

#### C-10 TOWN PLANNING

Lexington organized one of America's first town planning boards in 1918. Citizens wanted to preserve the historic buildings and character of the town and also use modern town planning concepts. These are some of the steps they took:

- In 1925, the town adopted zoning which was responsible for preserving the residential character of Main Street outside the commercial center. The town also enacted a sign code that year; it was made stricter in 1960.
- In 1956, the town accepted a Historic Districts Act and established a Commission to approve all construction and visual changes within the Districts.
- In 1964, the town appointed a committee to study and recommend plans for revitalization of the Center; this plan, which the town adopted, was based on the belief that economic vitality and aesthetic values are intertwined. Street amenities in the busy Center now include large trees, flowers, wide brick sidewalks and attractive lighting.
- Since 1965, a Design Advisory Group of planning and design professionals has assisted all town boards in reviewing new construction and renovation.

#### C-11 EMERY PARK

Once this park adorned Center Depot. Its landscaping was always due more to the efforts of Lexington citizens than to the railroad, which tried to build a business block on it in 1922. The town bought the land and changed the name to honor F. L. Emery, who left a sizable legacy for public park maintenance. Center Depot was sold to a bank when train service declined in the 1950s.

Look for the roof which overhangs the tracks and shelters passengers using the few remaining trains that

## C-2 THE BATTLE GREEN

The battle fought on the Lexington Common between the British and the Americans on April 19, 1775 was one of the first great events of the American Revolution. But for a century afterwards residents paid no particular attention to their town Common. They were not prepared for the turmoil and the overwhelming demand for food and other necessities when, on a cold snowy day, 100,000 visitors streamed into town to see President Grant and other dignitaries at the Centennial Celebration of 1875.

It was only after the experience of the Centennial that Lexington residents became concerned with preserving the appearance of the Common and surrounding buildings, but this was not soon enough to save an 18th century house facing the Common which was torn down in 1876. By 1917 homeowners around the Common had signed a covenant limiting their property to residential uses. An historic district was created in 1956 that includes the Common and nearby historic sites.

## C-3 FIRST TEACHERS' COLLEGE

This building was constructed in 1822 to house the Lexington Academy, a private school. In 1939, Horace Mann, Secretary to the Massachusetts Board of Education, persuaded the state to establish the nation's first normal schools (or teachers' colleges). Classes were held here for women only; other schools were male only or co-ed. After five years, enrollment grew too large and the Board found new quarters in Newton.

After a colorful period when the building successively housed a church, a variety store and a movie theater, the Lexington Masons acquired it in the 1920s.

## C-7 19TH CENTURY LANDSCAPE

In 18th century America, green space was taken for granted. In the 19th century, landscaping or the arrangement of plants into formal gardens became popular. By this time Lexington was emerging as a summer resort. Francis B. Hayes, President of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, vacationed here. He raised camellias and orchids in his greenhouses and planted many exotic trees on his 400 acre estate.

The formal Hayes park was first broken up for house lots in 1903 and lingers only in memory. Some of the plants and trees remain, particularly the masses of rhododendrons on Castle Road.

## C-8 MERRIAM HILL

In 1800, only 1000 people lived in Lexington. But in 1846, the railroad was built and the village became easily accessible to Boston.

Merriam Hill (sometimes called Dute Hill) was developed by new railroad commuters in the 1880s and '90s. As Lexington became a "bedroom community", it faced the challenge of preserving its Colonial heritage. The houses built in that era have today become objects of interest and study. Look on Merriam Hill for the rounded bays, towers and large wrap-around porches of the Queen Anne Revival style.

## C-9 RURAL ECONOMY

In Lexington's early days, a high water table and the lack of large streams discouraged manufacturing, but the topography did promote farming. As late as 1884, when new commuters were beginning to settle here, the town directory listed 17 milk dealers.

One commuter who moved to Lexington in 1870 from Charlestown was M. H. Merriam. He brought his shoe finding factory with him, moving the barn from his new suburban home to this site. His business flourished for over 50 years. Light industry is still permitted here, but new manufacturing is restricted to the outskirts of town.

## C-12 MUZZEY STREET

Although Lexington's significant historical heritage dates from Colonial times, many 19th century buildings remind us that the town's main growth came long after the Revolution. Eclectic Victorian structures cluster along the side streets adjoining Massachusetts Avenue.

This part of Muzzey Street still looks as it did in the late 19th century. Although many private dwellings are now converted for business use, their original character survives. Changing uses have not destroyed the fabric of this street.

## C-13 HANCOCK SCHOOL

When the Hancock School was built in 1893, its Romanesque design in brick and brownstone was the latest fashion. Architects H. W. Hartwell and W. S. Richardson combined function and aesthetics, locating the stairs in the towers on the north side and the classrooms on the south side facing the sun.

Before this large central school was constructed, the rural Lexington landscape was dotted with little one- and two-room schoolhouses. Today, a declining school population may force the closing of Hancock and challenge the community to find another use for this landmark building.

## C-14 42 FOREST STREET

This house has been moved twice in its long history, and its occupants fought both in the Revolution and the Civil War. It originally stood on Massachusetts Avenue directly in the path of the British, who raided it on April 19, 1775.

Many years later, the house was moved to Waltham Street. In 1861, George Dennett left it to fight in the Civil War. He was captured and interned in the dreaded prison camp at Andersonville, Georgia, but survived and returned to practice the carpenter's trade for many years. In 1894, Dennett's son-in-law bought the house and moved it here; he also built the house next door, No. 38.

# MUNROE TRAIL

The MUNROE TRAIL is one mile long, starting at the school administration building near the Town Hall and extending to the recently dedicated Museum of Our National Heritage, sponsored by the Scottish Rite Masons. It includes the oldest buildings still standing in Lexington, among them the Munroe Tavern where George Washington dined in 1789; the area settled by Lexington's earliest "ethnic" group—the Irish who came to build the railroad; the remains of the 1846 town hall and of the Russell House, a resort hotel of the late 19th century.

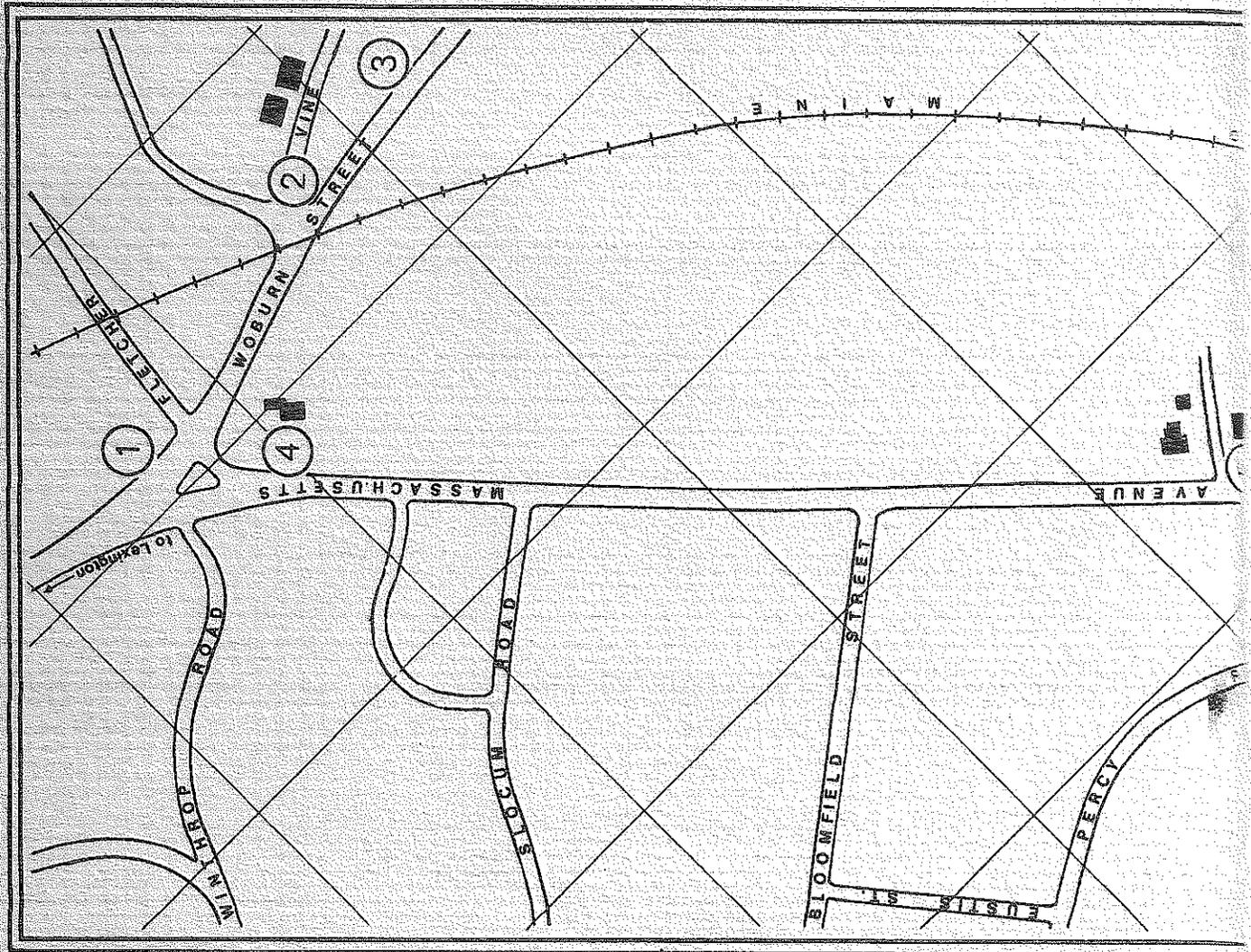
In this area flourished farmer, tavern keeper, clockmaker, philanthropist. Here, as in the Center, older buildings have been adapted to new uses, new buildings have been designed to enhance the total ambience, and, when all else failed, homes have been re-sited to keep them as a part of the Lexington tradition.

## M-1 TOWN MEETING CONSCIENCE

A generation ago, citizens voted at Town Meeting to buy this land and raze the dilapidated house on it. If they had not done so, the entrance to Lexington Center might have been marked by a series of commercial establishments more suitable to the gateway of an amusement park than to a quiet historic New England town. Lexington's townscape is now protected by the Historic Districts Commission which must approve any external alterations to structures within the boundaries of the Districts, extending from the Hancock Clarke House to East Lexington railroad station.

## M-2 OLD TOWN HALL

The two large buildings on the left side of Vine Street were originally one—the first Town Hall. Isaac Melvin, a noted Lexington master builder, designed it in 1846. It had a two-story central portion fronted by four Ionic columns. It



became the town high school in 1871 when a new town hall was built. Later it was moved here from where Muzzezy Junior High now stands. It was divided in half and the pillars were lost.

Other surviving buildings designed by Isaac Melvin are the Unitarian Church on the Common, ca. 1846, and the East Lexington Branch Library, ca. 1833.

### M-3 RELIGIOUS CHANGE

Lexington, like many Yankee towns, was settled mainly by people of English ancestry with common religious beliefs, who held both town meetings and church services in the meeting house. After church and town were legally separated in 1833, many Protestant groups were organized.

Irish immigrants came to Lexington to work on the railroad in the 1840s. Many settled along Woburn Street near the rail line and close to the large homes and commercial establishments where they worked. By 1852, they had organized the town's first Catholic Church, furthering the religious diversity which characterizes Lexington today.

### M-4 RESORT HOTELS

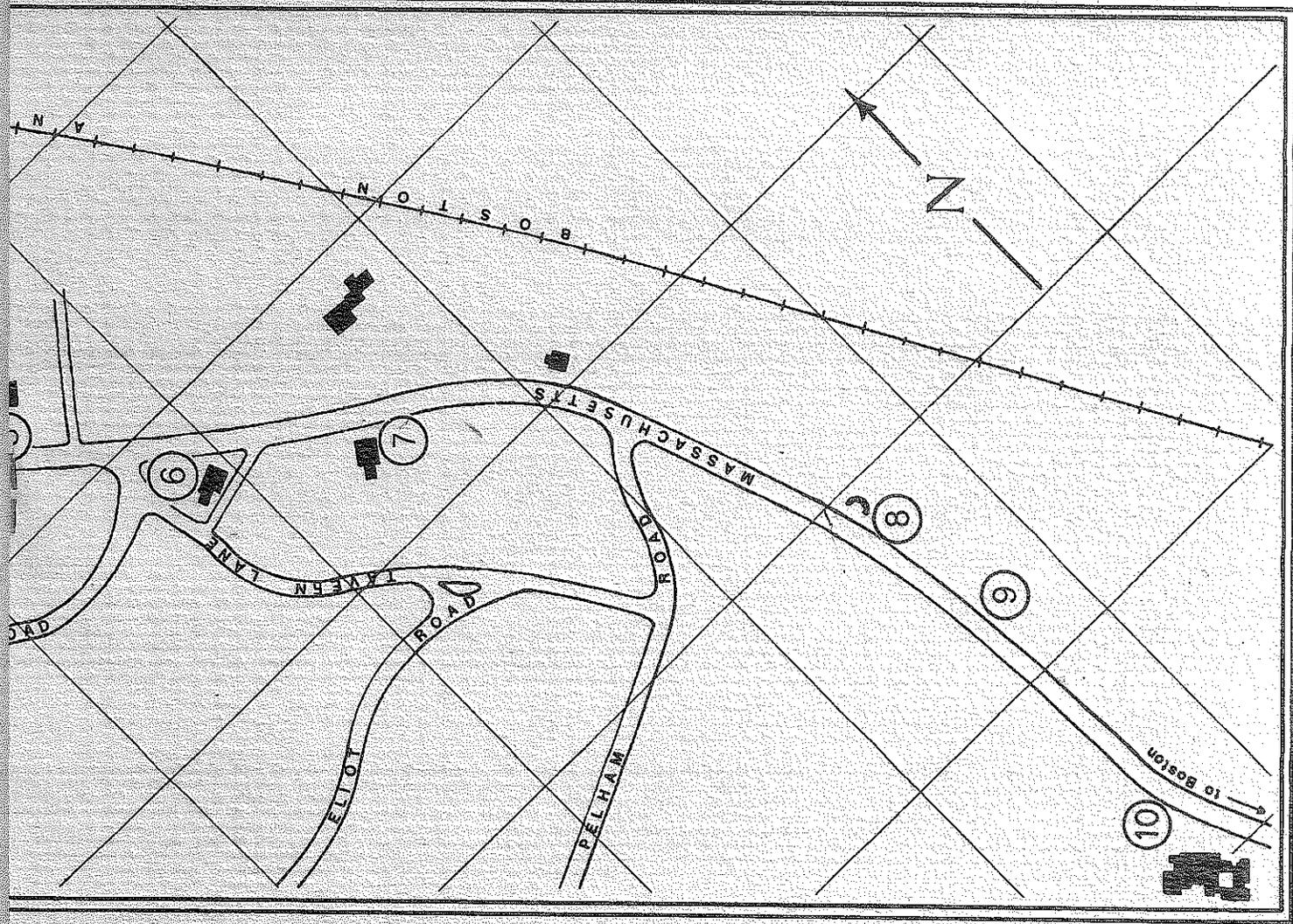
Opened in 1882 on this site, the Russell House was one of several country hotels that flourished in Lexington during the 19th and early 20th centuries. City folks came every summer to enjoy the fresh country air. A doorway and chimney remain visible today in the front cluster of new townhouses.

Another resort, the Massachusetts House, was first used to display Massachusetts exhibits in the 1879 Centennial at Philadelphia. It was later dismantled and moved to Lexington near the site of the Edison transformer station.

### M-5 MULLIKEN CLOCKS

Nathaniel Mulliken was a clockmaker who came to Lexington from Newburyport in 1751. Clockmaking was a complicated process requiring the skills of cabinetmaker, carpenter and machinist. Mulliken excelled in all these crafts and made clocks that are treasured by connoisseurs.

The British burned his house and shop during their retreat in 1775. His family built a new dwelling that was moved across the street to this location 100 years later. The house to the left was built about 1790 on the site of the old Raymond Tavern, demolished soon after the Revolution.



#### M-6 WILLIAM MUNROE

In the 18th century, men usually juggled several jobs at once. They farmed, kept public houses, worked at a trade and ran the affairs of the town and church as well.

Such a man was Col. William Munroe—a prototype of the aggressive, competent, hard-working Yankee we have come to idealize today. When he bought a "mansion house," a barn, workhouse, 3/4 of a potash house and 26 acres of land in 1770 from cabinetmaker John Buckman, he continued his trade as cooper, farmed the acreage and opened a tavern. This tavern survives today, bearing his name.

#### M-7 EARLY HOUSES

The Sanderson House is believed to be one of Lexington's few remaining 17th century structures. With its neighbors, the Munroe Tavern and the white Mason house across the road, it is part of a group of very early buildings. Two clues to their age are the massive supporting beams and huge chimneys.

Look for another early building, the Robbins House, at No. 1295, illustrated above. Built in 1716 in East Lexington, it was moved to its present site in 1946. Moving houses to new sites instead of tearing them down has been a frequent practice in Lexington.

#### M-8 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

In 1775, this route, then called the Concord or Cambridge Road, was the major highway from Cambridge to Concord. Teamsters, farmers and gentlemen in fancy carriages created a steady stream of traffic. In 1803-06, the Concord-Cambridge Turnpike was built in a nearly straight line—the mania of highway planners then as now. But many travelers preferred the old winding route.

The coming of the railroad in 1846 robbed this historic highway of its traffic. After that, many Lexington taverns closed. Today with the advent of the automobile, the Avenue serves once more as Lexington's main street.

#### M-9 TOWER PARK

Around 1900, philanthropists who appreciated the need for open space donated parkland to their towns. Miss Ellen Tower gave this park to Lexington in 1927. It was part of her family's estate which extended along both sides of Massachusetts Avenue. Today, conservation commissions like Lexington's seek to acquire open space with matching funds from federal and state programs. Lexington has 15% of its area preserved as park or conservation land, and in 1975 voted a \$2,000,000 bond issue to buy more. But the concern for conservation came too late to protect many attractive meadow and wetlands from development.

#### M-10 20TH CENTURY LAND USE

In recent years, Lexington has shown special concern for the relationship between the natural environment and the townscape by establishing the Historic Districts Commission and a Design Advisory Group. The Group encouraged the architects of the massive Scottish Rite Museum to scale its design and roof lines to its residential neighborhood.

Elsewhere in Lexington, at Six Moon Hill, Five Fields and Peacock Farms, architects sited houses so as to preserve the natural vegetation and contours of the land. They also employed a land use concept dating from colonial times by reserving acreage to be held in common.

# EAST LEXINGTON TRAIL

The EAST LEXINGTON TRAIL is only one-half mile long covering an area that has long thought of itself as a separate entity. Since the early 19th century the East Village has had its own church—the unusual octagon-shaped Follen Church—school, cemetery, post office, library, and store. It was the manufacturing center of Lexington and its character was shaped by men like Eli and Stephen Robbins and Ambrose Morell. At the end of the Trail beyond the little train station is a giant peat bog which once served as a local industry and source of fuel. The big shovels used by the peat workers can be seen at the Buckman Tavern in the Center.

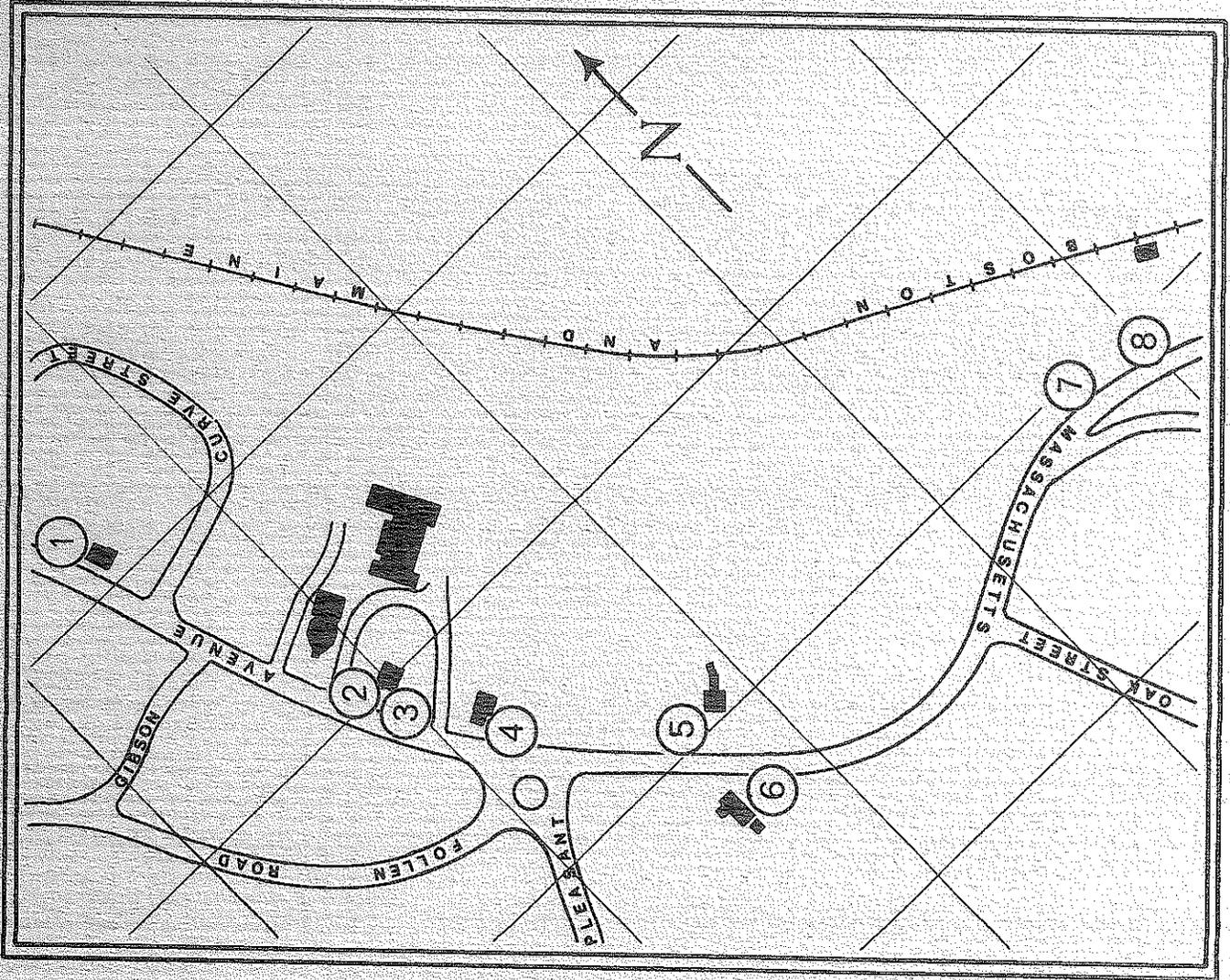
## E-1 BOWMAN TAVERN

Commercial traffic along Massachusetts Avenue in the 18th century was heavy enough to encourage many men to hang out tavern signs. For 20 years after 1825, this building was a tavern catering to teamsters and farmers driving sheep, turkeys and cattle to the slaughterhouses of Brighton. From here they traveled down Massachusetts Avenue to Cambridge, past Harvard College, across the Great Bridge and over the Charles River (now Larz Anderson Bridge near Harvard Stadium), and upriver to the Brighton cattle market.

## E-2 THE LECTURE HALL

East Lexington was a regular stop on the lecture circuit of the 19th century. Such issues as abolition, transcendentalism, and temperance were hotly debated here.

Eli Robbins constructed this Greek Revival building as a lecture hall in 1833. Like other prosperous businessmen of the period, Robbins promoted his home town by adding to its physical amenities. He laid out Pleasant Street and planted elms along Massachusetts Avenue. Robbins' legacy of large trees is in contrast to the giant signs and billboards that are today's evidence of business promotion in many communities.



### E-3 EAST LEXINGTON

East Lexington developed a strong identity of its own in the 19th century. Several fur trimming factories gave the town a manufacturing base that was absent in nearby Lexington Center. Rivalry between the two parts of town was sometimes intense. East Lexington residents were upset when new buildings such as Town Hall and the high school were located near Lexington Center. But these rivalries never led to complete rupture as had happened earlier in other Yankee towns such as Andover and Newbury.

Although the cluster of municipal buildings in the East Village is not readily apparent to motorists, the pedestrian will notice the comfortable walking distance between them: the church, the public lecture hall (now the branch library), the store and post office (once in the brick building on the corner of Pleasant Street), and the school that originally stood opposite the church on what is now a parking lot.

### E-4 COUNTRY STORE

To the villagers of East Lexington, the brick store on the corner was long a popular gathering place. One could buy penny candy, bolts of cloth and hardware. It was also a post office; upstairs there was a lecture hall and later a branch library.

Today, the outward appearance of the old brick country store is protected by the East Lexington Historic District. Except for the large bay window, it looks much as it did when Eli Robbins built it in 1828, the first brick structure in Lexington.

### E-5 MORELL-DANA HOUSE

This is the grandest local example of a practice common in prosperous New England towns, ca. 1830: remodeling houses into the latest fashion—Greek Revival style. Sometimes houses were turned to face gable end to the street, or columns were added and doorways redesigned. Here the Federal square shape with brick sides was left untouched by the owner, Ambrose Morell. The overhanging gable and Ionic columns were added to the front facade. Morell's daughter, Ellen Dana, niece of the author Richard Henry Dana, lived here until her death in 1913.

### E-6 BROWN FARM

The vegetable stand around the corner on Pleasant Street is one of the last working farms in Lexington. Wilson Farm today is only a small portion of a 100 acre homestead owned by the Brown family in the 18th century. Parts of their original farmhouse remain in this remodeled dwelling at 620 Massachusetts Avenue.

Eleven acres of hillside beyond the farm are protected, a vestige of rural Lexington as it was before the development following World War II. Many townspeople now regret that more aggressive public land acquisition policies were not implemented earlier to conserve the town's rural character.

### E-7 ROBBINS CEMETERY

Originally part of the Samuel Winship farm, this land was deeded by his son in 1784 as a cemetery for the Robbins, Winship, Buckman, Bowman and other Lexington families. Stephen Robbins and his son Eli, who are buried here, operated a fur dressing factory, a spice mill and a tannery. When they wanted to open a tavern and were refused permission by the selectmen; Eli enlisted Daniel Webster's help and won!

The willow and urn carved on many gravestones here are symbols of mourning widely used in the early 1800s in paintings and needlework as well as on headstones.

### E-8 RAILROAD HISTORY

A single-track railroad built in 1846 became the major link from Lexington to Boston. This little railroad station was one of five serving Lexington residents during the years when as many as 48 trains steamed through the town each day.

The automobile has long been accused of causing the railroad's decline, but horsecars and electric street railways were also to blame. Streetcar service from Lexington to Boston, via Arlington Heights and the Cambridge subway, began in 1900.